Pradesh Government for additional allotment of 20,000 KL of kerosene per month to meet the requirement of the additional BPL card-holders;

(b) if so, the action taken in this regard;

(c) whether Government propose to release additional allotment of 20,000 KL of kerosene per month immediately, in the interest of additional BPL card-holders; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefore?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) This Ministry has received representations from various State Government/Union Territories, including the Government of Andhra Pradesh, for the enhancement of their SKO quota.

PDS kerosene has been allocated to States/UTs on a historical basis. In accordance with the policy adopted by the Government of India in 2000, kerosene (SKO) allocation for distribution under the Public Distribution System (PDS) was reduced everyyear beginning 2001-02 till 2003-04, taking into account the number of LPG connections released in each State/Union Territory. While the initial allotment for 2004-05 was based on the criteria adopted hitherto, additional allocations were made during the year to meet urgent emergent demand. For the year 2005-06, allocations have been maintained at the level of 2004-05, including additional allocations made during that year.

With a view to assessing the genuine demand of kerosene in different States/UTs, in December 2004, the Government commissioned the first-ever comprehensive study of the subject through the National Council for Applied Economic Research (NCAER), NCAER have submitted their report in October, 2005. It is being examined with a view to rationalizing the allocation of PDS kerosene amongst States/UTs.

Indian tourists visited South-East Asian countries

709. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indians travelling to South-East Asian countries were pampering much more;

(b) if so, the number of tourists visited South-East Asian countries during the last two years;

(c) the revenue earned by Government from such visits;

(d) whether it is also a fact that the South-East Asian nations are working on packages to woo shopping-crazy Indians to their respective countries; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) Of the total Indian travelling abroad, about 17% travelled to South-East Asian countries during 2004 indicating their preference for such destinations.

(b) About 7.2 and 10.4 lakh Indians travelled to South-East Asian countries during 2003 and 2004 respectively.

(c) Revenue earned by South-East Asian countries from Indians visiting these countries is not available.

(d) and (e) A number of airlines and travel agencies have tied up with hoteliers and other stakeholders in South-East Asian coutnries, and offering cheap packages which include economy class return airfare, hotel accommodation for 2-3 days, Airport Hotel transfers, Daily Breakfast and Sight Seeing etc. Coupled with this, all major travel companies/hour operators have tie-ups with the Banks for travel loans, thus enabling people to travel now and pay later in easy instalments, which has resulted in a spurt in Indians travelling to cheaper South-East Asian destinations.

Promotion of tourism industry

†710. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) what meaningful steps have been taken to promote the tourism industry;

(b) whether her Ministry has announced group tour packages to attract foreign tourists;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.